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Inside Washington

Monzon Caper: Tip of the Iceberg?

The expulsion last week of Fidel Castro's top spy in this country, Mario Monzon Barata, after U.S. Customs Service and FBI agents in Florida seized "parts of a TV monitoring system," is not the whole story, HUMAN EVENTS has learned.

Not revealed by the State Department is that the 24-channel TV satellite receiver Monzon purchased was capable of intercepting U.S. military information bands, and that other TV equipment he had purchased in Los Angeles was "even more specifically of military value," according to a U.S. source close to the case. The L.A. shipment was seized on the heels of the Florida seizure.

Monzon was Cuba's General Intelligence Directorate Chief of Center in New York, using the diplomatic cover of second secretary in the Cuban U.N. Mission there—facts which were first publicized in a HUMAN EVENTS article (Oct. 31, 1981), "How Castro's Spies Seek to Destabilize U.S.," written by Daniel James. Monzon, wrote James, "is chief of all DGI operations in the United States."

Further pointing to the possibly larger importance of the Monzon operation is that, when he and Rodriguez were caught and deported, the Cuban government made no protest even for formality's sake. The reason, says a knowledgeable U.S. source, is that U.S. Customs is in possession of cancelled checks bearing Monzon's signature which constitute incontrovertible proof of his and Havana's guilt and would make the latter look foolish if it protested.

Furthermore, the electronic items Monzon purchased and had on order—worth perhaps \$500,000 or more—require an export license and are expressly forbidden to Cuba. Nevertheless, Monzon had been shipping such products to Cuba for a year before his apprehension.

A Florida firm has on file an order from Monzon for another \$150,000 worth of high-technology TV equipment. And "that may not be all," hints a U.S. official. The Monzon caper may be just the tip of the iceberg.